

the family, which honours them with libations of beer and offerings of the first-fruits." /

Thus among these tribes, who all belong to the great Bantu family, the public worship which a whole tribe pays to the souls of Its dead chiefs is probably nothing but an extension of the private worship which every family pays privately to the souls of Its dead members. And just as the members of his family whom a man worships privately are not mythical beings conjured up by imagination out of a distant past, but were once real men like himself whom he knew in life, It may be his father, or uncle, or elder brother, so we may be sure that In like manner the dead chiefs revered by the whole tribe are not creations of the mythical fancy, but were once real men of flesh and blood, who ruled over the tribe, and whose memory has been more or less faithfully preserved by tradition. In this respect the tribes of Northern Rhodesia are typical of all the tribes of that great Bantu family which occupies nearly the whole southern half of Africa, from the great equatorial lakes to the Cape of Good Hope. The main practical religion of all these numerous and widespread peoples appears to be the worship of their ancestors.

The . To adduce in full the evidence which points to this ancestrai° conclusion would lead us too far from our present sub- spirits ject. ft must suffice to cite a few typical statements of Bantu competent authorities which refer to different tribes of South°f Bantu stock. Speaking with special reference to the tribes of Africa. South-Eastern Africa, the Rev. James Macdonald tells us that " the religion of the Bantu, which they not only

but really regulate their conduct by, Is based on the  
 belief  
 that the spirits of their ancestors interfere constantly  
 In their  
 affairs. Every man worships his own ancestors and  
 offers  
 sacrifices to avert their wrath. The clan worships  
 the spirits  
 of the ancestors of its chiefs, and the tribe  
 worships the  
 spirits of the ancestors of the paramount chief."<sup>2</sup>  
 " The  
 religion of the Bantu was based upon the supposition  
 of the

<sup>1</sup> C. Gouldsbury and H. Sheane, of South African  
*Tubes" Journal of the*  
*op. cit.* pp. 84, sq. *Anthropological Institute,*  
**xix.** (1890)

<sup>2</sup> Rev, James Macdonald, "Manners, p. 286.  
 Compared., *Light in Africa* ^  
 Customs, Superstitions, and Religions (London, 1890), p.  
 191.